

# **VIVEKANAND EDUCATION SOCIETY'S INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY**

**(An Autonomous Institute Affiliated to University of Mumbai)**

**Department of Computer Engineering**



Project Report on

## **RCNN-CTC Model for Handwritten Text Recognition in-depth Analysis of the IAM Dataset**

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree

**BACHELOR OF ENGINEERING IN COMPUTER  
ENGINEERING**

By

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**University of Mumbai  
(AY 2023 - 24)**

# **VIVEKANAND EDUCATION SOCIETY'S INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY**

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## **Certificate**

This is to certify that the Mini Project entitled **“RCNN-CTC Model for Handwritten Text Recognition in-depth Analysis of the IAM Dataset”** is a bonafide work of **Yash Chhaproo (D12A - 7), Uzair Shaikh (D12A - 56), Anurag Shirsekar (D12A - 59) & Sai Thikekar (D12A - 64)** submitted to the University of Mumbai in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the degree of **“Bachelor of Engineering”** in **“Computer Engineering”**.

**Dr. (Mrs.) Nupur Giri**  
Mentor, Head of Department

**Dr. (Mrs.) J. M. Nair**  
Principal

# Mini Project Approval

This Mini Project entitled “**RCNN-CTC Model for Handwritten Text Recognition in-depth Analysis of the IAM Dataset**” by Yash Chhaproo (D12A - 7), Uzair Shaikh (D12A - 56), Anurag Shirsekar (D12A - 59) & Sai Thikekar (D12A - 64) is approved for the degree of **Bachelor of Engineering in Computer Engineering**.

## Examiners

1. ....  
(Internal Examiner name & sign)

2. ....  
(External Examiner name & sign)

**Date:**

**Place:** Chembur, Mumbai

# Declaration

We declare that this written submission represents our ideas in our own words and where others' ideas or words have been included, we have adequately cited and referenced the original sources. We also declare that we have adhered to all principles of academic honesty and integrity and have not misrepresented or fabricated or falsified any idea/data/fact/source in our submission. We understand that any violation of the above will be cause for disciplinary action by the Institute and can also evoke penal action from the sources which have thus not been properly cited or from whom proper permission has not been taken when needed.

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# Abstract

Optical Character Recognition (OCR) serves as a critical component in various applications, ranging from document digitization to automated data entry. In this study, we propose DeepOCR, a novel framework that combines Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) and Bidirectional Long Short-Term Memory (Bi-LSTM) networks for enhanced OCR performance. DeepOCR leverages the hierarchical feature extraction capabilities of CNNs to effectively capture intricate patterns within input images, while Bi-LSTM networks exploit sequential dependencies in character sequences. Furthermore, we employ Connectionist Temporal Classification (CTC) as a loss function to train the model end-to-end without requiring aligned input-output pairs. Through comprehensive experiments on benchmark datasets, DeepOCR demonstrates superior performance compared to conventional OCR systems, achieving remarkable accuracy rates and robustness across diverse input conditions. Our findings highlight the efficacy of integrating deep learning architectures and sequence modeling techniques for advancing OCR technology, paving the way for more efficient and reliable document processing solutions in real-world applications.



# List of abbreviations

Sr no.	Short form	Abbreviated form
1	OCR	Optical Character Recognition
2	DBNet	Differential Binarization Net
3	CRNN	Convolutional Recurrent Neural Network
4	ViTSTR	Vision Transformer
5	CNN	Convolutional Neural Network
6	RNN	Recurrent Neural Networks
7	BiLSTM	Bidirectional long short-term memory
8	CTC	Connectionist temporal classification
9	TTS	Text to Speech
10	BiGRU	bidirectional gated recurrent unit

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# Chapter I: Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

The Optical Character Recognition (OCR) project is dedicated to the creation of a sophisticated system with the ability to accurately identify and transcribe printed or handwritten text found within images or documents. This technology is crucial in today's digital age, where the need for efficient data extraction and document processing is paramount. By leveraging advanced image processing techniques and machine learning algorithms, the OCR system endeavors to overcome the challenges posed by varying fonts, styles, and languages, while also addressing issues such as noise and distortion in input images. Ultimately, the goal is to develop a robust and versatile OCR solution that can streamline tasks like document scanning, text extraction, and data entry across a wide range of applications and industries.

## 1.2 Motivation

The motivation behind advancing Optical Character Recognition (OCR) technology stems from the ever-growing trend towards digitization of documents and the consequent demand for efficient data handling. As organizations and individuals increasingly rely on digital platforms for storing and managing information, OCR technology emerges as a vital tool in automating tedious tasks such as document scanning, text extraction, and data entry. By accurately recognizing and transcribing printed or handwritten text from images or documents, OCR systems streamline workflows, reduce manual labor, and enhance productivity. Furthermore, in sectors like finance, healthcare, and education, where vast amounts of data are processed daily, the adoption of OCR technology promises improved efficiency, accuracy, and cost-effectiveness in managing and utilizing valuable information resources.

### **1.3 Problem Statement**

The development of an effective OCR system presents a significant challenge due to the diverse range of fonts, styles, and languages encountered in real-world documents, compounded by the presence of noise and distortion in input images. Achieving accurate character recognition across these variables requires sophisticated algorithms and techniques that can adapt and generalize to different scenarios. Machine learning approaches, such as convolutional neural networks (CNNs) and recurrent neural networks (RNNs), offer promise in this regard by learning complex patterns and features from training data. Additionally, preprocessing techniques like image enhancement and noise reduction play a crucial role in improving the quality of input images, thereby enhancing the OCR system's performance. Despite these challenges, advancements in OCR technology continue to push the boundaries of accuracy and robustness, paving the way for more efficient and reliable text recognition solutions.

### **1.4 Existing Systems**

A plethora of OCR systems populate the landscape, spanning from commercial software solutions to freely available open-source libraries. These systems harness a diverse array of techniques to tackle the complex task of character recognition, with common approaches including neural networks, pattern recognition, and machine learning algorithms. Neural networks, particularly convolutional neural networks (CNNs) and recurrent neural networks (RNNs), have gained prominence for their ability to learn intricate patterns and features from vast amounts of data, enabling them to excel in tasks like image classification and text recognition. Pattern recognition algorithms analyze and identify recurring shapes and structures within images, aiding in the extraction of textual content. Machine learning algorithms, including support vector machines (SVMs) and decision trees, contribute to the OCR process by discerning patterns and making predictions based on training data. By leveraging these techniques, OCR systems strive to achieve higher accuracy and robustness in character recognition across a diverse range of documents and images.

## **1.5 Lacuna of existing systems**

Existing OCR systems often encounter difficulties when confronted with low-quality images, complex backgrounds, or unconventional fonts, which can result in inaccuracies during character recognition. The presence of noise, blurriness, or other artifacts in the input images can impede the system's ability to accurately identify and transcribe text. Moreover, complex backgrounds or overlapping elements within the document can further challenge the OCR process by introducing distractions or obscuring the text. Additionally, some OCR systems may exhibit limitations in terms of language support or handwriting styles, potentially leading to errors or omissions in text recognition tasks involving non-standard scripts or languages. Addressing these challenges requires ongoing research and development efforts aimed at enhancing the robustness, adaptability, and language support of OCR systems to ensure accurate and reliable text extraction across diverse contexts and environments.

## **1.6 Relevance of the project**

The proposed OCR project endeavors to overcome the limitations inherent in existing systems by leveraging advanced image processing techniques and machine learning algorithms to enhance accuracy and robustness. By integrating cutting-edge methodologies such as deep learning, convolutional neural networks (CNNs), and recurrent neural networks (RNNs), the project seeks to develop a system capable of effectively handling challenges such as low-quality images, complex backgrounds, and unusual fonts. Through extensive training on diverse datasets and rigorous testing across various scenarios, the proposed OCR solution aims to achieve superior performance and reliability in text recognition tasks, thereby offering a more efficient and dependable solution for document scanning, text extraction, and data entry applications.

## Chapter II: Literature survey

Title	Author	Methodology	Conclusion
Paper [1]	Akhil Chawla(Student), Aarushi Gupta (Student), Mohana(Asst. Pro), K. S. Shushrutha (Associate prof.)	Optical Character Recognition (OCR)	The research showed the ways to use OCR tools available to extract the data and to store them in a tabular form mainly for enhancing it for use in excel sheets. Many python libraries were used such as pdf-table-extract, tabula, pdfplumber, etc.
Paper [2]	Stacey Whitmore	Operating Procedure Extender for Novel Systems (OPENS)	The concepts proven by OPENS could automate the process of converting PBPs to CBPs, significantly reducing the time and cost involved.
Paper [3]	Baoguang Shi, Xiang Bal, Cong Yao	PIL (Python Imaging Library) or Pillow, Matplotlib, OpenCV, Pytesseract	The paper presents a powerful neural network architecture for scene text recognition.Utilizing convolutional and recurrent layers,the model outperforms existing methods, advancements in real-world text recognition.
Paper [4]	CNN and OpenCV libraries for data	Data Preprocessing on images, use	Struggles with handwritten

	processing, Open source OCR engine	tesseract to extract data and then output in the form of csv	bills. Object misidentification. Emphasizing the need for improved OCR techniques across document types.
Paper [5]	DNN model for table prediction	A verification phase with graph representation which improved precision by reducing false positives.	Graph representation, effectively reduced false positives and significantly increased the overall precision of table detection
Paper [6]	Minghui Liao <sup>1</sup> , Zhaoyi Wan, Cong Yao, Kai Chen, Xiang Bai	Real-time Scene Text Detection with Differentiable Binarization.	Algorithm used for Text detection.
Paper [7]	Firat Kizilirmak , Berrin Yanikoglu	CNN-BiLSTM model for English Handwriting Recognition: Comprehensive Evaluation on the IAM Dataset	CNN-BiLSTM with CTC achieves 3.59% CER, proposes test-time augmentation, error analysis, and releases public code for reproducibility.



# Chapter III: Requirement Gathering for the Proposed System

## 3.1 Introduction to requirement gathering

Requirement gathering serves as the foundation for the OCR project, involving the systematic collection and analysis of stakeholder needs and expectations. This phase entails thorough communication with end-users, domain experts, and other relevant stakeholders to identify and prioritize the functional and non-functional requirements of the OCR system. By establishing clear objectives and scope, the requirement gathering process sets the stage for the subsequent phases of system design, implementation, and testing.

## 3.2 Functional requirements

The functional requirements of the OCR system delineate the specific capabilities and features that the software must possess to fulfill its intended purpose effectively. These requirements encompass essential functionalities such as image preprocessing, character segmentation, optical character recognition, language support, text extraction, and output formatting. Additionally, the system should facilitate user interaction through intuitive graphical user interfaces (GUIs) and provide functionalities for managing input/output files, configuring settings, and monitoring processing status.

## 3.3 Non functional requirements

In addition to functional capabilities, the OCR system must adhere to various non-functional requirements that dictate its performance, usability, reliability, scalability, and security aspects. Non-functional requirements include criteria such as accuracy and precision in character recognition, processing speed, memory utilization, error handling mechanisms, compatibility with different operating systems and hardware platforms, accessibility for users with disabilities, data privacy, and compliance with relevant regulations and standards.

## 3.4 Hardware, Software, Technology and tools utilized

The development and deployment of the OCR system necessitate careful consideration of the hardware, software, technologies, and tools utilized throughout the project lifecycle. Hardware requirements may include computing resources such as processors, memory, storage devices, and peripheral devices like scanners or cameras. Software requirements

encompass operating systems, programming languages, libraries, frameworks, and development environments suitable for implementing image processing algorithms, machine learning models, and user interfaces. Technologies such as deep learning, computer vision, natural language processing, and cloud computing may be leveraged to enhance the capabilities and performance of the OCR system. Additionally, various tools for version control, project management, documentation, testing, and debugging contribute to the efficient development and maintenance of the OCR solution.

### **3.5 Constraints**

Despite the aspirations for the OCR project, several constraints may influence its design, development, and deployment. These constraints could include budgetary limitations, time constraints, resource availability, technological constraints, regulatory requirements, and compatibility constraints with existing systems or infrastructure. Balancing these constraints while striving to meet the project objectives is essential for ensuring the successful execution and delivery of the OCR system within the specified constraints.

# Chapter IV: Proposed Design

## 4.1 Block diagram of system

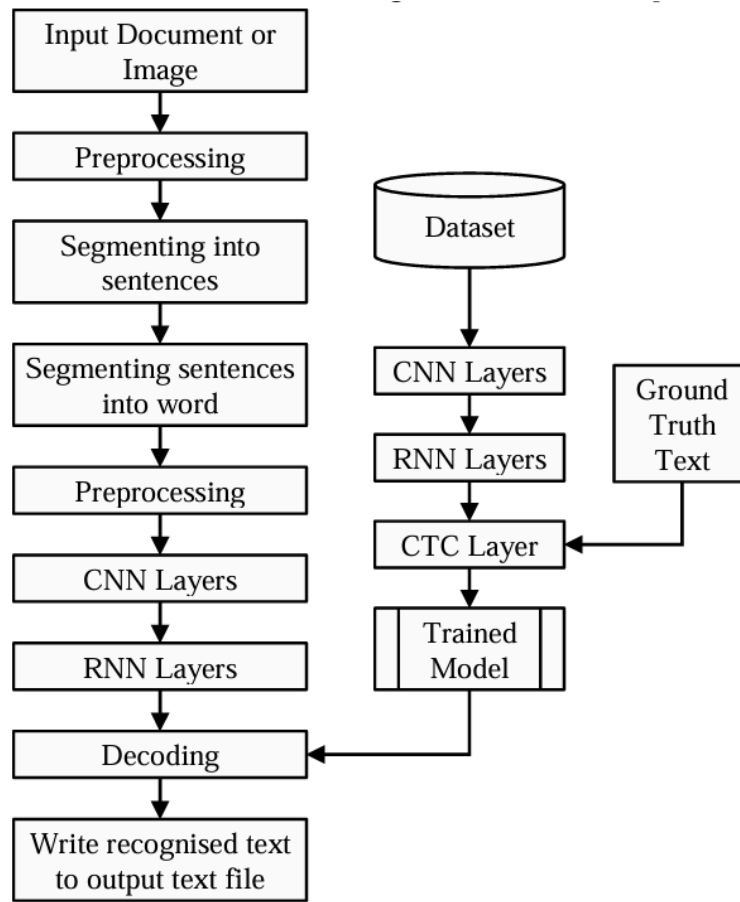


Figure 4.1 Block diagram of CRNN-CTC system

## 4.2 Modular design of the system

The modular design of our system encompasses several key components, each responsible for specific functionalities to ensure the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the system.

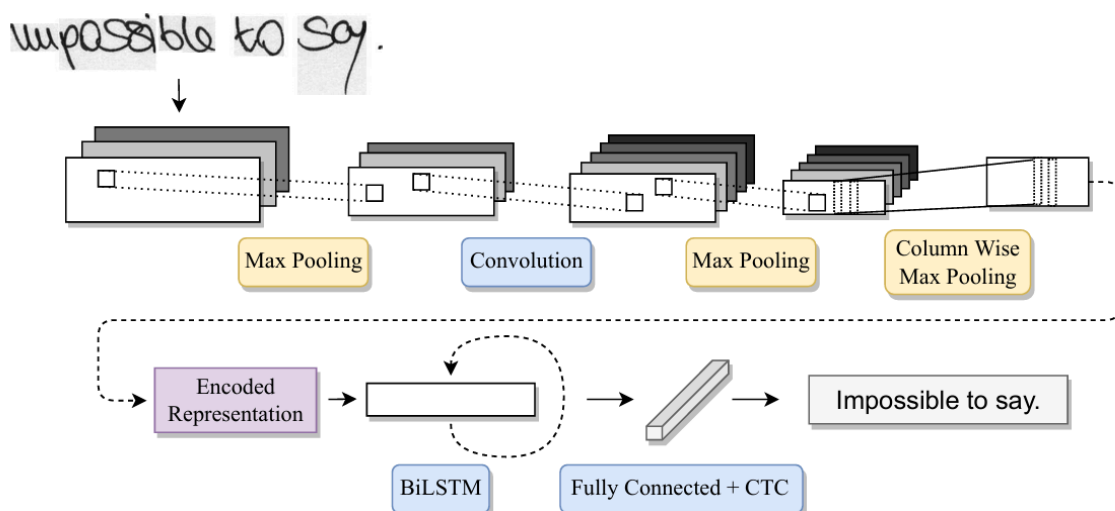


Figure 4.2 Architecture of system

# Chapter V: Implementation of Proposed System

## 5.1 Methodology employed for development

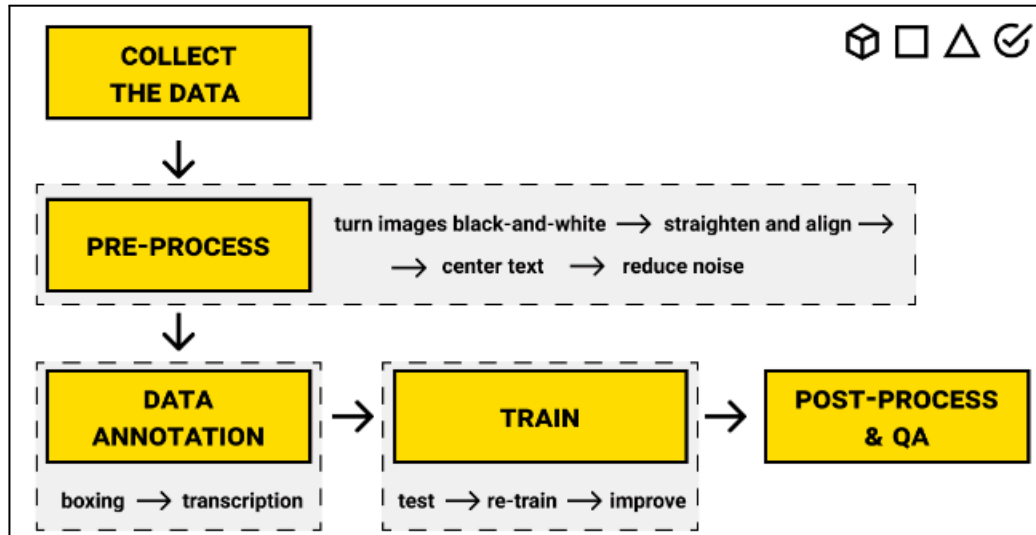


Figure 5.1 Methodology followed

- 1. Input Data Acquisition:  
Capture the input data, which can be images or scanned documents.  
Preprocess the input data to improve image quality, including tasks like noise reduction, deskewing, and contrast enhancement.
- 2. Text Localization:  
Identify and locate text regions within the preprocessed images.  
Use techniques like edge detection, contour analysis, or object detection to detect text regions.
- 3. Text Segmentation:  
Segment text regions into individual lines or words.  
Employ layout analysis techniques to separate text from other elements in the image.
- 4. Text Recognition:  
Recognize the characters or words within the segmented text regions.  
Implement OCR algorithms for character or word recognition.  
Utilize deep learning models, such as Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) and Recurrent Neural Networks (RNNs), for text recognition.
- 5. Post-processing:  
Correct recognition errors using post-processing techniques.

Evaluate and refine OCR results through techniques like language modeling, spell-checking, and context-based correction.

- 6. Output Generation:  
Generate the final text output from the recognized characters or words.  
Create a structured document if necessary, such as converting recognized text into searchable PDFs.
- 7. Storage and Retrieval:  
Store the recognized text and associated metadata in a database or file system for future retrieval.  
Implement indexing and searching capabilities for efficient document retrieval.
- 8. Integration:  
Integrate the OCR system with other applications or services, such as document management systems or archival databases.
- 9. Performance Monitoring:  
Implement monitoring and reporting tools to assess the performance of the OCR system.  
Collect data on processing speed, accuracy, and user interactions.

## 5.1 Algorithms and flowcharts for the respective models developed

### Algorithm for DeepOCR Framework

Initialization:

- Define the architecture of the DeepOCR framework, incorporating CNNs and Bi-LSTM networks.
- Initialize the DeepOCR model with appropriate parameters and hyperparameters.

Data Preprocessing:

- Preprocess input images/documents to enhance quality and readability.
- Apply techniques such as resizing, normalization, and noise reduction to standardize input data.

Model Design:

- Design the DeepOCR model architecture, integrating CNNs for hierarchical feature extraction and Bi-LSTM networks for capturing sequential dependencies in character sequences.

- Configure the CNN layers to extract features from input images, capturing intricate patterns and details.
- Configure the Bi-LSTM layers to process the extracted features, exploiting sequential dependencies in character sequences.

#### Loss Function Selection:

- Employ Connectionist Temporal Classification (CTC) as the loss function for training the DeepOCR model.
- CTC allows for end-to-end training of the model without requiring aligned input-output pairs, making it suitable for OCR tasks.

#### Training:

- Train the DeepOCR model on a diverse dataset containing images/documents with varying fonts, styles, and languages.
- Utilize gradient descent optimization algorithms, such as Adam or RMSprop, to optimize the model parameters.
- Use the CTC loss function to guide the training process, minimizing the discrepancy between predicted and ground truth character sequences.

#### Evaluation:

- Evaluate the performance of the trained DeepOCR model using a validation split of the dataset.
- Measure metrics such as accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score to assess the model's effectiveness in OCR tasks.
- Conduct comprehensive experiments on benchmark datasets to compare DeepOCR against conventional OCR systems and state-of-the-art approaches.

#### Analysis:

- Analyze the performance of DeepOCR in terms of accuracy, robustness, and computational efficiency.
- Compare the results with existing OCR systems, highlighting the superior performance of DeepOCR across diverse input conditions.

## 5.2 Datasets source and utilization

- A dataset of handwritten English sentences, referred to as IAM, is used to train models for recognizing such text.
- Based on the LOB corpus, IAM goes beyond lexicon-level recognition tasks by incorporating linguistic information.
- The IAM dataset includes techniques for processing images to extract handwritten text from forms and separate it into lines and words.
- To evaluate the model's performance, a separate set of handwritten paragraph images was collected from various individuals.
- These custom images were captured under standard lighting conditions using a 5-megapixel camera with a resolution between 800 and 1000 dpi.

# Chapter VI: Testing of the Proposed System

## 6.1 Introduction to testing

Testing is a critical phase in the development lifecycle, ensuring the reliability, functionality, and performance of the system before deployment. It involves systematically evaluating the system's behavior under different conditions to uncover defects, validate functionality, and ensure that it meets the specified requirements.

## 6.2 Types of tests considered

- Unit Tests: These tests focus on individual components or modules of the system, verifying their functionality in isolation.
- Integration Tests: Integration tests validate the interactions and interfaces between different components or modules to ensure they work together seamlessly.
- Functional Tests: Functional tests assess the system's behavior against functional requirements, ensuring that it performs as expected from an end-user perspective.
- Performance Tests: Performance tests evaluate the system's responsiveness, scalability, and stability under various load conditions to identify bottlenecks and optimize performance.
- Usability Tests: Usability tests assess the system's user-friendliness, intuitiveness, and accessibility to ensure a positive user experience.
- Security Tests: Security tests identify vulnerabilities and weaknesses in the system's security mechanisms, protecting against potential threats and breaches.

## 6.3 Various test case scenarios considered

- Recognition Accuracy: Testing the accuracy of character recognition against a set of known text samples to ensure precise interpretation of characters.
- Real-time Performance: Assessing the system's responsiveness and speed in processing OCR tasks in real-time scenarios, such as document scanning or image capture.
- Robustness Testing: Evaluating the system's ability to maintain accuracy and performance under various environmental conditions, including changes in lighting, image quality, and input variations.



- **End-to-End Testing:** Testing the entire OCR pipeline from image preprocessing to character recognition to validate the system's overall functionality and coherence in processing documents.
- **Error Handling:** Testing the system's capability to handle and recover from errors, exceptions, and unexpected inputs gracefully to ensure stability and reliability in OCR tasks.

#### **6.4 Inference drawn from the test cases**

Through rigorous testing, our aim is to validate the accuracy, reliability, and robustness of the DeepOCR system. By identifying and addressing potential issues, we can enhance the system's performance and ensure its effectiveness in real-world scenarios. Testing also provides valuable insights into areas for improvement, guiding future enhancements and optimizations to deliver a more seamless and user-friendly OCR experience.

# Chapter VII: Results and discussion

## 7.1 Performance Evaluation measures

Evaluation measures considered:

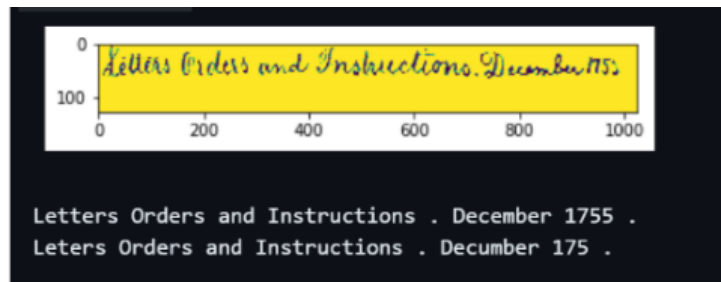
- Accuracy: This metric measures the proportion of correctly classified instances among all instances.
- Precision (Micro): Micro-precision calculates precision globally by counting the total true positives, false positives, and false negatives. It is particularly useful when dealing with multiclass or multilabel classification problems.
- Precision (Macro): Macro-precision calculates precision for each class independently and then takes the average across all classes.
- Recall (Micro): Micro-recall calculates recall globally by counting the total true positives, false positives, and false negatives. It measures the model's ability to correctly identify all relevant instances.
- Recall (Macro): Macro-recall calculates recall for each class independently and then takes the average across all classes. It provides insight into the model's ability to recall instances from each class.
- Loss: Loss function measures the discrepancy between the predicted values and the actual values in the training data.

Sr. No	HTR Models	Time/Epochs	Loss	Val_Loss
1.	CNN - BiGRU	30	0.2128	0.4485
2.	CNN - BiLSTM	30	0.1281	0.2998
3.	RCNN - CTC	15	1.6617	1.7420

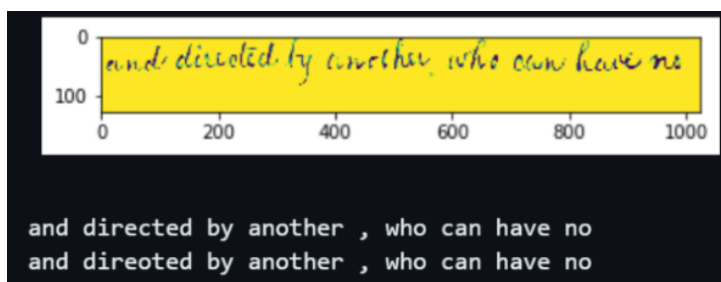
Table 7.1 Performance of main model on test data

## 7.2 Input Parameters / Features considered

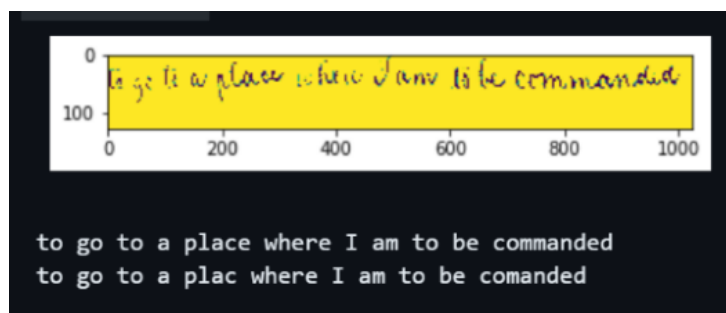
### Image Dataset



7.2.1

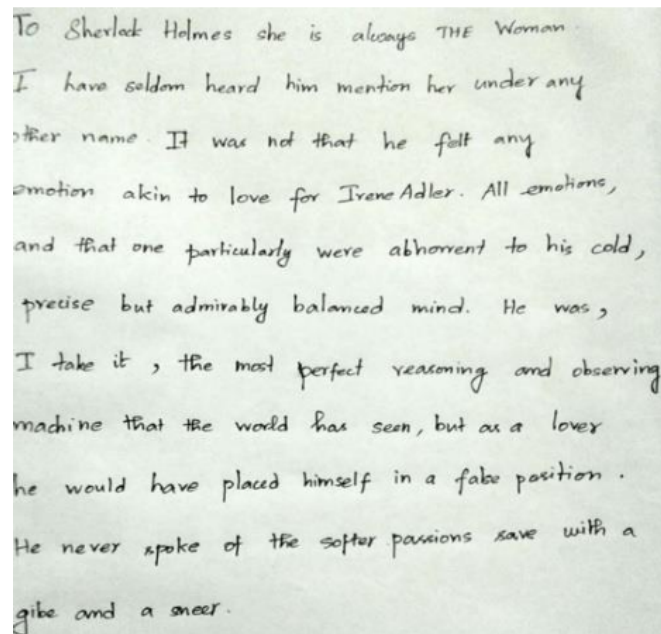


7.2.2



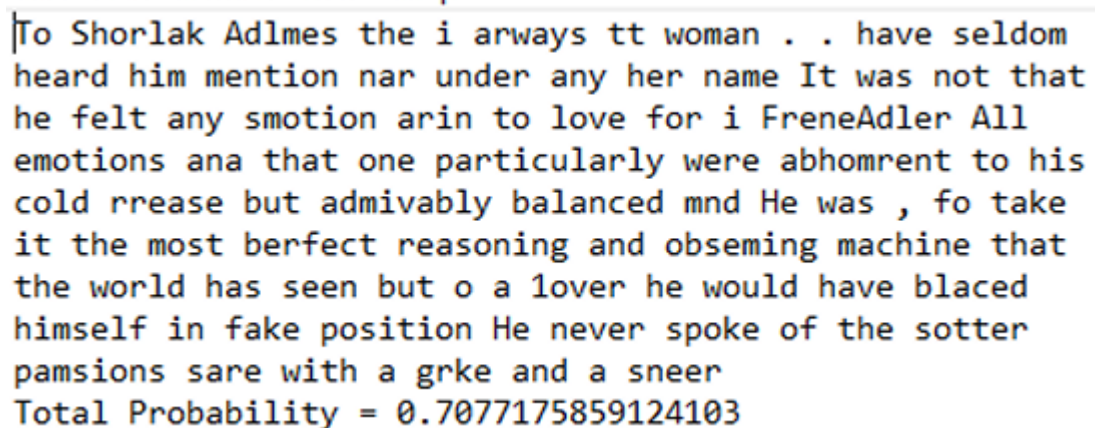
7.2.3

### 7.3 Graphical and statistical output



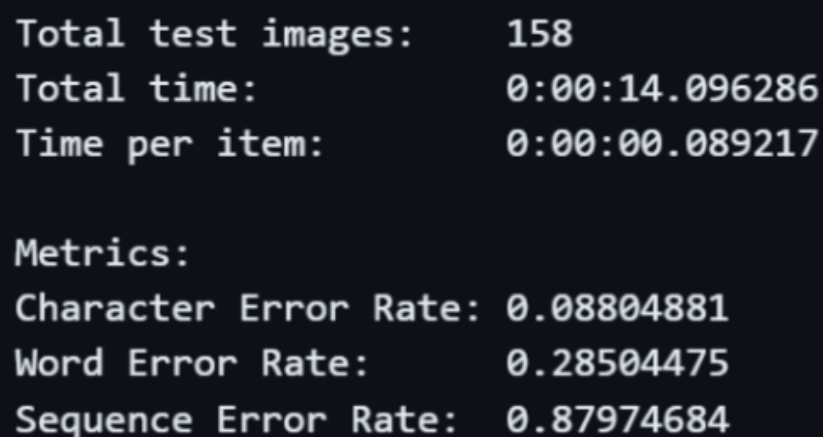
To Sherlock Holmes she is always THE Woman.  
I have seldom heard him mention her under any  
other name. It was not that he felt any  
emotion akin to love for Irene Adler. All emotions,  
and that one particularly were abhorrent to his cold,  
precise but admirably balanced mind. He was,  
I take it, the most perfect reasoning and observing  
machine that the world has seen, but as a lover  
he would have placed himself in a false position.  
He never spoke of the softer passions save with a  
gibe and a sneer.

7.3.1. Input Image



To Shorlak Adlmes the i arways tt woman . . have seldom  
heard him mention nar under any her name It was not that  
he felt any smotion arin to love for i FreneAdler All  
emotions ana that one particularly were abhomrent to his  
cold rrease but admivably balanced mnd He was , fo take  
it the most perfect reasoning and obseming machine that  
the world has seen but o a lover he would have blaced  
himself in fake position He never spoke of the sotter  
pamsions sare with a grke and a sneer  
Total Probability = 0.7077175859124103

7.3.2. Output Image



```
Total test images:    158
Total time:          0:00:14.096286
Time per item:       0:00:00.089217

Metrics:
Character Error Rate: 0.08804881
Word Error Rate:     0.28504475
Sequence Error Rate: 0.87974684
```

7.3.3. Evaluation metrics

# Chapter VIII: Conclusion

## 8.1 Limitations

While the proposed OCR system aims to address many challenges associated with existing systems, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations to set realistic expectations and guide future development efforts. Some potential limitations of the proposed system include:

- **Accuracy in Challenging Scenarios:** Despite advancements in machine learning and image processing, the OCR system may still struggle with accurately recognizing characters in low-quality images, documents with complex backgrounds, or unusual fonts. Achieving high accuracy in such challenging scenarios remains a continuing area of research and improvement.
- **Language Support:** While the OCR system aims to support multiple languages, there may be limitations in recognizing certain scripts or languages with less widespread usage or unique characteristics. Enhancing language support and handling diverse linguistic nuances represent ongoing challenges.
- **Processing Speed:** The computational complexity of advanced image processing and machine learning algorithms may impose limitations on the processing speed of the OCR system, particularly when dealing with large volumes of data or real-time processing requirements. Optimizing algorithms and leveraging parallel computing architectures can mitigate this limitation to some extent.

## 8.2 Conclusion

The Optical Character Recognition (OCR) project represents a significant endeavor to develop a sophisticated system capable of accurately identifying and transcribing printed

or handwritten text from images or documents. Through the integration of advanced image processing techniques and machine learning algorithms, the proposed OCR solution aims to overcome challenges such as varying fonts, styles, languages, and input image quality. While the project acknowledges certain limitations, it endeavors to push the boundaries of accuracy, robustness, and efficiency in text recognition tasks.

By addressing the motivations behind advancing OCR technology, understanding the problem definition, surveying existing systems, and gathering requirements, the project lays a solid foundation for the design, development, and deployment of a comprehensive OCR solution. Moving forward, continual research and development efforts will be essential to address the identified limitations, enhance system capabilities, and adapt to evolving technological and user needs.

### 8.3 Future Scope

The OCR project holds immense potential for future enhancements and expansions, paving the way for further innovation and advancement in text recognition technology. Some avenues for future exploration and development include:

- 1) Enhanced Accuracy and Robustness: Continued research into deep learning architectures, reinforcement learning techniques, and data augmentation methods can further improve the accuracy and robustness of the OCR system, especially in challenging scenarios.
- 2) Language and Script Diversity: Expanding language support and refining models to accommodate diverse scripts and languages will enhance the accessibility and usability of the OCR system across global contexts.
- 3) Real-Time Processing and Scalability: Leveraging cloud computing resources, distributed computing frameworks, and parallel processing techniques can enable real-time processing capabilities and scalability to handle large-scale document processing tasks efficiently.
- 4) Integration with Other Systems: Integrating the OCR system with existing document management systems, workflow automation platforms, and enterprise resource planning (ERP) software can streamline document processing workflows

and enhance overall organizational productivity.

- 5) User Experience Improvements: Iterative refinement of the user interface design, incorporating user feedback, usability testing, and accessibility features, will ensure a seamless and intuitive user experience for both technical and non-technical users.

By pursuing these avenues for future development and innovation, the OCR project can continue to evolve and adapt to meet the growing demands of digital document processing and information management in diverse industries and applications.

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